And of course we are often hit and kicked, even if we are over eighteen. Men over thirty-five are generally not hit in the face —they just get an occasional hit with the whip. In some districts it is considered a very grave thing to be struck with a whip or stick. In those districts we don't mind the kicks and hits in the face, which belong to the daily routine, but we do not permit ourselves to be whipped. 627

To you it probably seems very extraordinary, this being hit. To us it is not. We are hit by our parents, at school, in the army, of course, where the sergeants kick our behinds; the gendarmes hit us in the face if there is trouble with us and the estate-management staff always hit us. 600

The *csiras*, for instance, who mostly sleep in the stables beside the cows, are awakened by a kick. True, they would not move without being kicked. They don't think this extraordinary. They are used to handling the cattle, and the cattle have to be prodded by kicks and hits.

Well, when the day's work is over—when our lords have told the gardeners, shepherds, field-labourers, cart-drivers what to do next day, they, of course, standing at attention—then we are free till next dawn. 517 512

Then we clean ourselves. At dawn we don't bother. Would you? Would you if you knew that, immediately after, you will have to work with the cattle, with manure, in the fields, in the dust? Anyhow, we clean ourselves and prepare for our dinner, when we always eat something warm, not only pretend to do so.

We eat some soup. The soup is generally made by throwing a few pieces of potatoes into boiling water. A few onions and a little lard make a delicious soup. In harder times the soup is naturally thinner. Not everybody likes our soups. Once a lady visited us from the manor and tasted the soup. She spat it out, and said it tasted like dish-water. We like it. Sometimes we can eat our favourite dish, which is made of a mixture of wheat and potatoes, with a little yeast, and boiled in water. We very rarely eat meat. At weddings and funerals we manage to eat meat, because it would be a great shame to get married or die without a feast of meat and wine. 262

Then—after dinner—we live our private lives. We sit in front of our huts and talk. In the winter we sit inside. Sometimes we gather in one of the huts to read. We know how to read and write. We go to schools, which are very far away. The children walk in most cases ten miles to and from the schools every day. But they like to do it. And we like to read. We don't read newspapers, for we have not got the money. But we read books, 517 212

517 chiefly history books, if we can get them. Books are treasures.
212 Generally the children get them from people who are interested in us. There are students in Budapest who sometimes organise libraries on wheels. Last year this library let us have a book by Tôlstoy for a week—*War and Peace*. We could not read the whole of it. We gathered in Uncle Andras's house, all the adult population of our cluster of huts, and we took turns reading aloud. It was winter, and we read four hours every evening, so that we had only three and a half hours' sleep. It was wonderful. We asked the students to send us a book about our history, so that we should be able to keep it. They sent it to Uncle Andras. He had to go a long way for it—to the village post office. But they did not give him the book, but told him to go to the gendarmerie. There they boxed his ears and hit his feet with sticks. "This is to teach you not to ask for books from the city, you old socialist swine." So, you see, it is quite difficult to get books.

517 Mostly we have no oil for our lamps. So we just talk. Old people talk about their grandfathers and great-grandfathers. They generally begin like this: "He was a very poor man, grandfather Janos was, rest his soul", as if it were an unusual thing to be very poor.

We talk. The young folk play around a bit; they go walking
837 or sing for themselves. There are always a few young men about
566 who are sulking because their girl is being "used" in the manor or by someone belonging to the estate-management staff.

Because the fact is that our women-folk *are* "used" by our lords, estate-managers, their assistants, and even by the overseers. We belong to them, don't we? It is quite natural that if they want to use our girls they simply say, "You, Julcsa or Terka, come round this evening." And they naturally go. Some young estate assistants are nice about it and say, "Come in, Julcsa, to darn my socks"; but they generally simply tell them to come in.

The girls don't talk about this. They get some wine and sometimes a piece of bacon. Next day they are tired. But they work just the same. If they are a bit slack, the assistant rebukes them: "Do you think you can be slack just because I used you last night?" Then the girl blushes. So they work even harder next day so as not to be shamed.

566 Well, after dinner we live our private life. Let us suppose that
135 it is summer. Harvest time. The *puszta* is quite lively. The landworkers are here. We, the serf-servants, are not enough to do the harvest, so every spring the bailiff of our lord goes away to hire harvest gangs.

He goes to far-away places, to the east and north of the country

857
522

Ohi, ohi, ohi, away,
To-day it is Ash-Wednesday,
Girls, you better drag the trunk
Onto the nearest main road.

857 The military touch displayed in these two customs[1] is
[212] the explanation of the fact that Hungarian children grew so
fond of them, although they are purely Christian — that is fairly
recent — customs. The spelling is also of Western origin ;
it is only here that the Hungarians learnt Western writing.
It is true that this was very long ago : already in 1055 Hun-
garian words were written with Latin letters. Their ancient
writing, which the Hungarians had brought with them from
the East, had been runes traced from right to left. Bonfinio,
the court historian of King Mathias, made this comment on
it : — «with few signs they express much meaning». The
oldest document of this ancient Hungarian writing dates
from 1515. But the ancient runes were gradually forgotten,
and the Hungarians also enlisted as Saint Gregory's knights
[867] and Saint Blase's spelling soldiers. — They learnt a great
many good and beautiful things. They learnt the Golden
ABC, which had arranged in alphabetical order all the
highest Christian moral teachings, and nothing was left out
of this collection ! This is how it began :

a : all that you do not want for yourself
you must not do it to others !

b : burden the servants of your house
as much as you want to be burdened yourself !

When the Protestant students of Sárospatak (a historic
Hungarian college) grew tired of these perpetual moral
teachings, they made parodies of these verses. This is what
they invented for the letters :

40 [1 [i.e. The recruiting of truants for their schools
and the singing of spelling rhymes -- Analyst]

have been started. From the standpoint of raising the general cultural standards, the furtherance of elementary schooling and public education was the most important. The number of elementary state schools rose from 5584 in 1918 to 6899 in the summer of 1938, and the teaching staff from 14,400 to 20,149. During this time the number of board-schools was increased from 253 to 397 and their staff from 2653 to 4124. The Government carried out a large-scale elementary school building programme between 1926 and 1930. Out of the 52 million pengő fund created for this purpose 3645 schoolrooms and 1572 homes for teachers were built. In 1937 this activity gained fresh impetus after being temporarily interrupted because of the severe economic depression. In the last ten years 2000 new schoolrooms and 870 new homes for teachers were built. After the war the Government plans to build an additional 8000 new schoolrooms and houses for teachers.

Reducing illiteracy.

The results of the constructive educational policy are already apparent in the reduction in the percentage of the illiterate. In 1920 the percentage of illiterates over 6 years of age was 15·2%; in 1930 it was 9·6% and in 1941 4% in the territory left to us by the treaty of Trianon. Naturally in the recently regained territories the percentage of illiteracy is far greater since there the development of the educational system was slower, and in some districts it was altogether absent.

Among the laws and regulations governing public education in the last twenty years was Act VII of 1926, which deserves special attention. This law compelled the suburban companies and agricultural industries to estab-